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DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/S
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SUBJECT: BOTSWANA'S STATEMENT ON ZIMBABWE JULY 04, 2008

REF: GABORONE 547

¶1. The GOB Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation shared with the Embassy the official statement regarding the GOB's position on the outcome of the June 27, 2008 Presidential run-off election in Zimbabwe.

Begin Verbatim Official GOB Text:

¶1. The Government of the Republic of Botswana has been following the events leading to, and the holding of the Presidential run-off election on June 27, 2008 in the Republic of Zimbabwe.

¶2. During this period, Botswana expressed its concern about the deteriorating political situation in Zimbabwe and made repeated calls on the authorities in that country to take necessary steps to ensure a climate conducive to holding free and fair elections.

¶3. The atmosphere prevailing before the run-off election in Zimbabwe was not conducive to the holding of a free and fair election, given the escalating acts of violence and intimidation that resulted in the loss of lives, destruction of property and displacement of people from their homes. This eventually led to the withdrawal of the MDC leader, Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, from the run-off contest.

¶4. In response, the United Nations Security Council issued a Presidential Statement on June 23, 2008 condemning the violent campaign against political opposition in Zimbabwe and expressed regret that the campaign of violence made it impossible for a free and fair election to take place.

¶5. In addition, the troika of the SADC Organ, which met in the Kingdom of Swaziland on June 25, 2008, advised that the correct course of action under the circumstances was a postponement of the run-off election. This would have provided an opportunity for all parties to engage in talks with the aim of finding the best possible way of resolving their differences.

¶6. Notwithstanding the advice of the United Nations Security Council and Troika of the SADC Organ, the authorities of Zimbabwe decided to proceed with an election whose outcome was unlikely to enjoy credibility and legitimacy, both in the region and internationally.

¶7. This has now come to pass, as the reports of the SADC Elections Observer Mission, Pan-African Parliament and AU Observer Missions have shown.

¶8. These reports concluded, amongst others, that;
> the pre-election phase was characterised by politically motivated violence, intimidation and displacement of the electorate;
> the process leading up to the presidential run-off election did

not conform to SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections;
> the atmosphere prevailing in the country did not give rise to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections;
> the result of the June 27, 2008 run-off election did not represent the will of the people of Zimbabwe; and
> conditions should be put in place for the holding of free, fair and credible elections as soon as possible in line with the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections.

¶9. It is abundantly clear from these findings that the result of the June 27, 2008 run-off election cannot be accepted, as it violates the core principles of SADC, the African Union and the United Nations. As a country that practices democracy and the rule of law, Botswana does not, therefore, recognize the outcome of the Presidential run-off election, and would expect other SADC member states to do the same.

¶10. It is against this background that Botswana urges SADC to assume its responsibilities by taking proactive steps that are consistent with its principles and objectives. It is therefore Botswana's position that Zimbabwe not be allowed to participate in SADC meetings until such time that they demonstrate their commitment to strictly adhere to the organisation's principles.

¶11. Such steps would enhance the credibility of SADC and provide an enabling environment for the people of Zimbabwe to find a lasting solution to the problems that confront them.

¶12. As a way forward, Botswana agrees with the AU position that mediation efforts should continue. We wish to urge, however, that such mediation efforts be expedited, given a defined time frame, and conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust and good faith, where both parties are treated as equal partners.

End Verbatim Official GOB Text.

DROUIN